(v) The NCOs have been educated and sensitised to be alive to the sensibility of the troops.

(vi) Visits by senior staff officers apart from formation commanders to units to assess conditions of employment and living.

(vii) The training capsules on relaxation techniques including Yoga and Pranayam have been introduced.

(viii) Leave policy has been liberalised permitting splitting of annual and casual leave. The troops will now be able to go to their home towns on leave thrice a year instead of twice a year earlier.

(ix) Rotation of units and individuals to minimize exposure to stress.

(x) All Chief Ministers have been requested to make the civil administration more responsive to the problems of serving soldiers and their families.

(xi) A helpline with toll free number has been established.

(xii) Efforts are made for identification and counselling of persons who are at higher combat stress by Regimental Medical Officers, junior leaders and unit commanders.

(xiii) Grant of additional rail warrant to go home or Selected Place of Residence of family to all ranks of armed forces serving in field/ counter insurgency/counter terrorist operational aeas.

(xiv) Rationalisation of scheme for LTC for both officers and Personnel Below Officer Rank (PBORs) and removal of restriction of 1450 kms. for availing All India LTC.

(xv) Grant of High Altitude (Uncongenial Climate) (HAUC) allowance at enhanced rates to troops deployed in more difficult, hazardous isolated areas within the existing HAUC areas.

(xvi) Under the Married Accommodation Project, houses are being built at different Stations to improve the availability of family accommodation.

Shortage of aircrafts in IAF

1720. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are over 1000 fit and trained IAF pilots doing ground duties because there are not enough aircrafts available with IAF;

(b) if so, what is the present availability of aircrafts and how many aircrafts are required more by IAF to fully utilize the services of 3068 pilots on whom Rs.5000 crore has already been spent in training by Government; and

(c) what are the reasons for delay in purchasing 126 multi-role combat jets by IAF, the sanction for which has already been accorded by Government since the past three years?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The trained IAF pilots on ground assignments are against authorized posts which need to be manned by them in order to sustain combat potential of the IAF.

(c) Proposal for procurement of 126 Multi Role Combat Aircraft for the Air Force involves complex issues relating to transfer of technology, maintainability aspects, product support, determination of selection criteria etc., which required detailed consultation with different authorities.

Delay in procurement of aircrafts by Air Force

†1721. SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for which the Air Force has not been able to procure aircrafts despite according sanction by the Cabinet for procuring 126 fighter aircrafts for Air Force keeping in view decreasing fleet of fighter aircrafts;

(b) whether it is a fact that Air Force has not been able to procure these aircrafts because the Ministry of Defence has not yet prepared the RFP for sending the proposal for the same; and

(c) if so, by when the Ministry of Defence would prepare the RFP so that these aircrafts could be procured at the earliest?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) The procurement of 126 Medium Multi Role Combat Aircraft for the Air Force involves complex issues relating to transfer of technology, determination of selection criteria, product support etc. The parameters of the Request For Proposal (RFP) were approved by the Defence Acquisition Council at its meeting held on 29th June, 2007. The RFP is being finalized and is likely to be issued shortly.

Acquisition of tribal land around Ranchi airport

1722. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 1650 acres of mainly tribal land in and around present Ranchi Airport were requisitioned by the then British Government in India in 1942 temporarily for war purposes; and

(b) if so, whether these lands were returned to the original land owners after the war was over or are still occupied by the Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) Approximately 1121 acres of land was acquired for Ranchi Air Field during 1942-1944 and 1962-1964.

(b) Land measuring 8.88 acres was reconveyed to the State Government.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.